Sergianism 16, 36-38, 60-70, 76-83
"Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod," by Boris Talantov 273-293
Sergius, Patriarch of Moscow 8, 14-16, 26-30, 36-37, 65-68, 84-96, 112-125, 133-136, 273-293, 295-298
Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich 27
Solovki Monastery 112
Spanish Orthodox Mission 56
Struve, Nikita 275

Talantov, Boris 16, 136, 265 *ill.*
Orthodox Confessor in an Atheistic Society 31-39 *ill.*
"Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod" 273-293
Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre 177-179
Theodosius, St., of Chernigov 188-190
Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow 10, 13, 18, 20-21, 63-68
Timothy of Alexandria 299
True Orthodox Church 267, 274, 276
See also Catacomb Church

Urusova, N. V. 17-19, 187-188

Valaam Monastery 196
Varlaam, Archbishop of Pskov and Yaroslavl 27
Varnava, Patriarch of Serbia 68-70
Vedanta Society 155-166, 174-179
Victor, Bishop of Glazov
Biography 112
Epistles of 113-118, 123-125
Vincent, St., of Lerins 58
Victor, St., of Marseilles 57
Vivekananda, Swami 154-166, 174-179 *passim*

Western Orthodox (Pre-Schism) Saints 56-59

Xenia, Blessed, of Petersburg 294, 299
Life and Miracles 126-136 *ill.*

Zlata, St., New-Martyr
Life 268-272 *ill.*

THE ORTHODOX WORD

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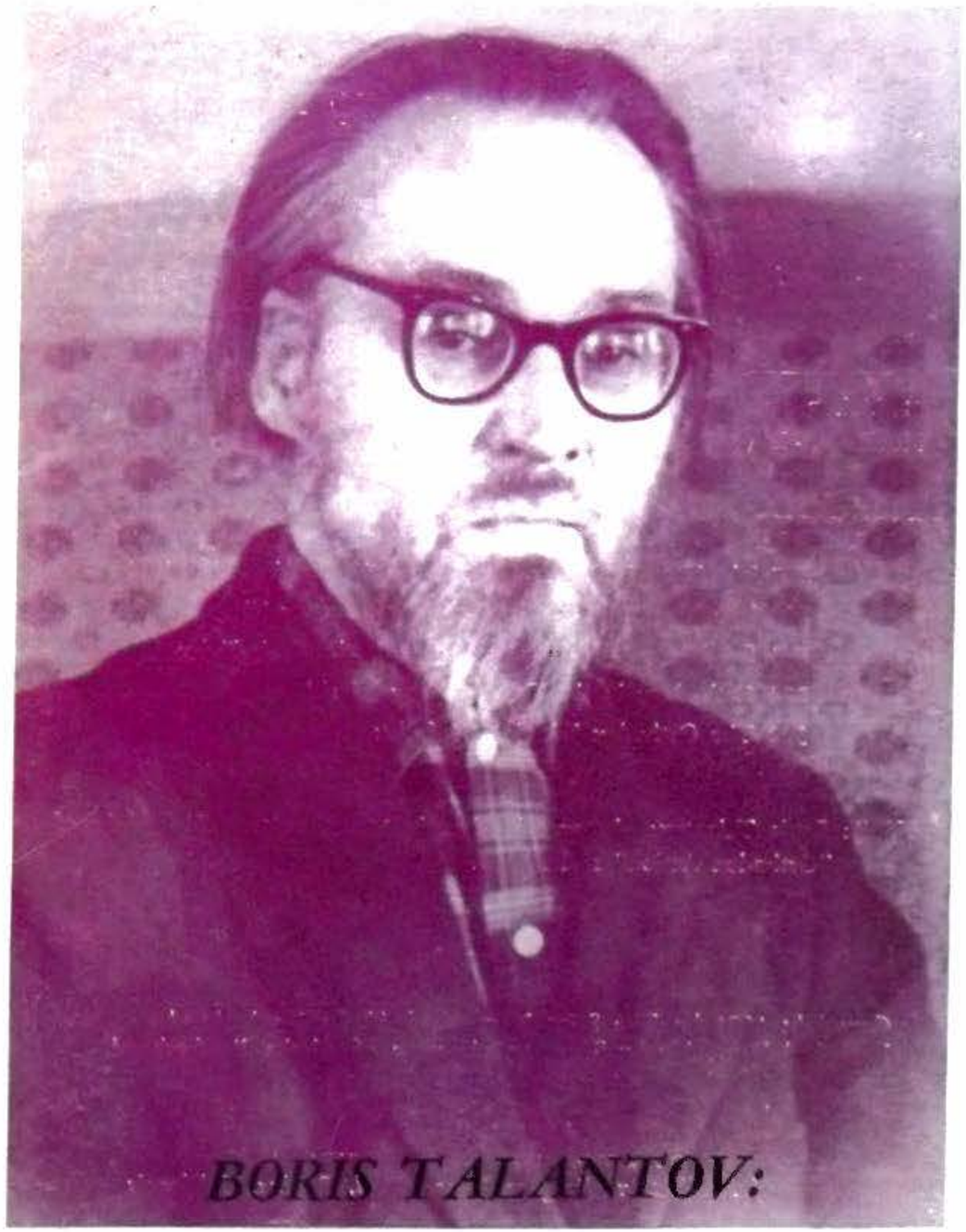
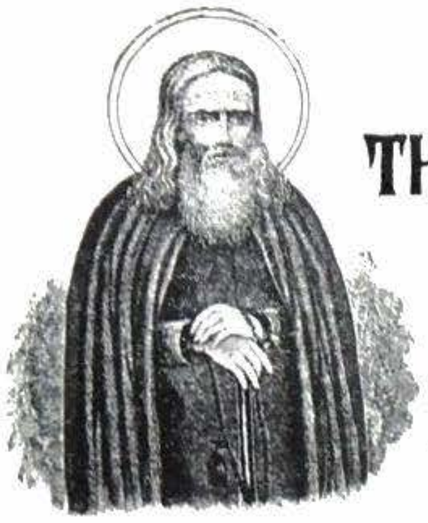


BORIS TALANTOV:

SERGIANISM



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CONTENTS

267 The True Orthodox Church and the Russian Church Abroad
268 The Martyrdom of the Holy New-Martyr Zlata
273 Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod *by Boris Talantov*
294 Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World
302 The Orthodox Word 1971 Index

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The True Orthodox Church and the Russian Church Abroad

Resolution of the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (Sept. 1|14, 1971)

THE SOBOR OF BISHOPS of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the only free part of the Russian Church, looks with sorrow upon the sufferings to which believers are subjected within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. To the open persecutions of the atheistic regime, which sets as its aim the extermination of all religion, there are added temptations from false brethren.

In 1927, when the late Metropolitan of Nizhegorod, Sergius, who called himself Patriarch of Moscow, issued his well-known Declaration, the elder bishops of the Russian Church, and among them those chosen by Patriarch Tikhon in his testament for temporary leadership of the Russian Church, did not agree with him, seeing the ruinousness for Orthodox souls of the new course along which he was leading the Church, against the instructions of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk. The names of Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Arsenius, Joseph, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, and many other hierarchs, clerics, and laymen will enter the history of the Church on an equal par with the most celebrated confessors of Orthodoxy in the face of persecutions, impiety, and heresies.

The free part of the Russian Church, which finds itself outside the boundaries of the USSR, is heart and soul with the confessors of the faith, whom the anti-religious guidebooks call "True Orthodox Christians," and who in common usage are often called "the Catacomb Church"; for they are obliged to hide themselves from the civil authorities in the same way that believers hid in the catacombs in the first centuries of Christianity. The Sobor of Bishops acknowledges its spiritual unity with them, and the Russian Church Outside of Russia always prays for all those who under conditions of persecution manage to preserve the truth and are *not unequally yoked with unbelievers*, recognizing that there is nothing in common between light and darkness and no agreement between Christ and Belial (II Cor. 6:14-15).

(*Continued on page* 272)

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE HOLY

NEW-MARTYR ZLATA

WHO CONTESTED IN THE

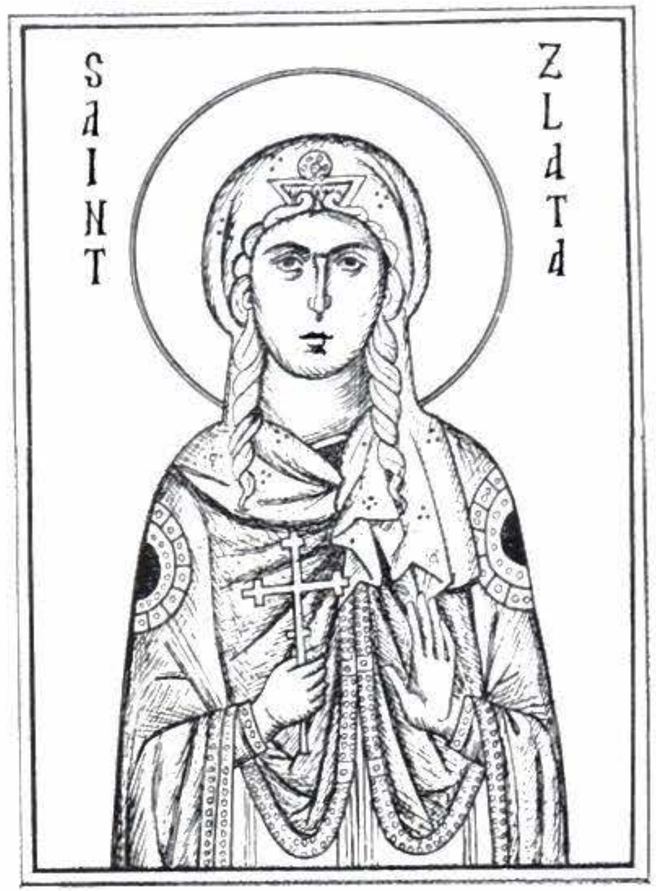
YEAR OF OUR LORD 1795

In torments, O Zlata, thou wast as brilliant
As gold that hath been purified by fire.

ZLATA,* THE NEW VIRGIN-MARTYR and undefiled bride of the heavenly King, Christ God, was from the village of Slatena, of the district of Meglena, which lies near the border of Serbia and Bulgaria. She was of a poor family, being one of four daughters. Yet she was rich in acquired and natural virtues; in acquired virtues, that is to say, by her fervent faith in God, and by her virginity and prudence; in natural virtues, by her comeliness and beauty, for which also the blessed one was deemed worthy of being perfected by a glorious and noble martyrdom.

There was a certain Turk there, who seeing her beauty and comeliness, was pierced in the heart by satanic love for her, and he kept watch to find an appropriate time to accomplish the evil purpose which he had conceived. One day, the Saint came out with other women to gather wood. When the Hagarene — that plotter against the Saint's virginity — learned of this, he took some other Turks with him also, and going there, seized her and carried her off by force to his house. At first he began to flatter the Saint with many promises, attempting in this manner to pervert her convictions and lead her to his religion. He told her that if she accepted and became Moslem, he would take her as wife. At the same time, he began to threaten her also, saying that if she were not convinced by his words, he would submit her to great tortures.

* In the Greek Menaion, the Saint is known as *Chryse*; in the Slavic, as *Zlata*. In both cases, the word means "golden."



THE HOLY NEW-MARTYR ZLATA
Commemorated on October 13

TROPARION, TONE 3

THOU WAST a golden vessel of virginity* and undefiled bride of Christ,* O Zlata, thou right-glorious virgin;* for having preserved thy virginity blamelessly,* thou didst contest for Christ in a godly manner.* O glorious martyr,* beseech thy Bridegroom* that He may grant us His great mercy.

But when she who was golden truly, both in mind and in name, heard these things so unexpectedly, she did not fear at all, but in her heart she called upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to come to her aid, and with great nobility and boldness she answered, "I believe and worship my Christ, and Him alone do I have as my Bridegroom, Whom I shall never deny, even though you inflict ten thousand tortures upon me,—even though you cut my body into small pieces."

When they heard these things, they understood that they alone would not be able to convince her. For this cause, they used other means. Wherefore, knowing that women are more adept than men in deceiving others, especially other women, they gave the Saint over to their women, and commanded them to use every means and device to convince her. When they had taken the Martyr, what did they not do, what did they not devise, what magic spells did they not use against the virgin? For nearly six months they incited the blessed one to accept their religion, but in vain did they labor, for the blessed Zlata was firmly established upon the immovable rock of the Faith of Christ. Afterwards, they called the Martyr's own parents and sisters, and with great threats commanded them to incite their daughter to become Moslem, or else she would be put to death and they would be tortured and would suffer great loss.

Therefore, when the parents and sisters of the Martyr drew near to her (for fear constrained them to do this, though unwillingly), they said and did all those things which are able to soften even the hardest and most adamantine soul, and they wept and cried and said, "O sweetest daughter, have pity on yourself and on us your parents and your sisters who are all in danger of being destroyed on your account. Deny Christ just for the sake of appearances, so that both you and we may be delivered. Christ is compassionate and will forgive you this sin because of the necessity and violence." And here, let each one consider how vehement and how great was this warfare which the devil had devised and set in motion against the Martyr, and what thoughts of weakness and sympathy could have overcome the tender virgin from the rivers of tears which her mother and father and sisters shed in her presence.

But take courage, beloved, the power of Christ conquered even this warfare and device of the devil; for being aflame with the heartfelt fire of love for Christ, Zlata, who was manly and mighty in soul, was not at all inclined to sympathy by the words and tears of her parents and sisters, as nature demanded. Rather, like one above flesh and blood, and beyond the limits and

laws of nature, she turned and spoke these praiseworthy and most wise words to her parents and sisters. "You, who incite me to deny Christ, the true God, are no longer my parents and sisters, nor do I wish to have you as such henceforth. But in your stead, I have my Lord Jesus Christ as father, my Lady, the Theotokos, as mother, and the Saints as my brothers and sisters." And with this answer she turned them away.

Well done to your stouthearted courage, O Saint! Well done to your true love for God! Well done to your wise convictions, worthy of heavenly praises! Truly, brethren, in this Saint there is fulfilled that which the divine David said: *My father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord hath taken me to Himself* (Psalm 26:10), and that which the Lord said: *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother.... And a man's foes shall be they of his own household* (Matthew 10:34-36).

When the Moslems, and especially that evil lover of the virgin, saw that they could achieve nothing, nor pervert the Saint from the Faith of Christ, even with those means and instruments which they had conceived, they abandoned flatteries and words from that time forward, and began torturing the Martyr. At first, for three whole months, they beat her daily with clubs. Later they skinned her and took many strips from her flesh and left them hanging in front of her, so that she might be stricken with fear at the sight of them. The blood ran like a river from the virginal body of the Martyr, and the nearby earth was reddened. Afterwards they heated a skewer and passed it directly through the ears of the Martyr, so that smoke came forth from her nose and mouth.

While suffering such numerous and such grievous tortures, which would humble even the most stouthearted of men, the Martyr of Christ endured with great nobility, being strengthened by the power of the Cross and by her heartfelt love for Christ. For as Simeon the Translator says, "The soul that is held by bonds of love for God deems suffering as nothing; rather, it revels in pain and prospers in adversity." When the Saint heard that there nearby was the priest Timothy, the prohegoumenos of the august Monastery of Stavronikita on the Holy Mountain, a man modest and trustworthy whom she had as her spiritual father, who also narrated her martyrdom, she sent word to him by a certain Christian that he make supplication unto God, that she might be accounted worthy to finish the course of her martyrdom in a manner pleasing to God.

Finally, not being satisfied with the numerous torments which they had inflicted upon the Saint, but rather marvelling how she remained yet alive and did not die, those cruel and hard-hearted ones — nay, one should say rather those crueler than the wild beasts themselves — could not endure the fact that they all had been conquered by a maiden, and they became so angry and obstinate — Oh! what does not evil devise! — that they hung the lamb of Christ upon a wild pear tree, and all ran at her with their knives and cut the sacred body of the virgin to pieces.

In this manner was the good Zlata tested and made radiant by such numerous tortures, like gold in a furnace. She surrendered her holy soul into the hands of her immortal Bridegroom, and received a double crown as virgin and as athlete. And now she dances and rejoices together with the prudent and prize-winning virgins in the heavenly bridal chambers, and stands at the right hand of her Bridegroom, Christ, and reigns together with Him unto the ages of ages. As for her victorious and virginal relics, certain Christians took them secretly and buried them with honor and reverence. By her intercessions may we also be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Amen.

THE TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

(*Continued from page 267*)

The free part of the Russian Church, besides praying, strives to help its brethren who suffer for the Faith in the Homeland also by continually striving to reveal to the world the true situation of the Church in the Soviet Union, unmasking the lie of her supposed well-being, which false pastors, travelling abroad, attempt to spread there, glorifying the persecutors and disparaging the persecuted.

In the painful circumstances which our brethren in the Soviet Union must experience, we find a consolation in the example of the first centuries of Christianity, when the persecutors of Christ likewise attempted physically to exterminate the Holy Church. But we remember the encouraging words of the Saviour, *Fear not, little flock* (Luke 12:32). And we remember likewise the Saviour's words of encouragement for those whom the Lord has judged to be on this earth in the last days of its existence: *Then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh* (Luke 21:28).

Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod

By BORIS TALANTOV

The two texts that follow — they are actually two parts of a single essay — are of crucial importance for an understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Communist Yoke. They were written by a true confessor of Orthodoxy, who died in prison in the Soviet Union this very year for having written these and similar texts (*see* The Orthodox Word, 1971, no. 1, pp. 31-39). *They are presented here as a direct response to the plea of the author himself* (p. 292): *"This betrayal... must be made known to all believers in Russia and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate... represents a great danger for all believers." The texts are primary documents exposing with direct and irrefutable proof the conscious betrayal of Russian Orthodoxy by its own hierarchs.*

It is probably significant that these documents have not yet been printed in their entirety in the original Russian or in any other language. (Brief excerpts have appeared in English in PATRIARCH AND PROPHETS, *ed. by Rev. Michael Bordeaux, Praeger, N.Y., 1970, pp. 330-331; and longer quotations are given in John B. Dunlop, "The Recent Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate Abroad and in the USSR," St. Nectarios Educational Series no. 46, Seattle, 1970, pp. 101-116). This is perhaps owing to the "narrowness" of their concentration on one specific Orthodox Church question; or perhaps to the severe and uncompromising tone; or perhaps even to the fact that the chief church figure singled out for censure here is one whom certain circles in the West have reasons for seeing in as favorable a light as possible. But whatever reason may have prevented their publication before this, their publication now in English should only be welcomed by every Orthodox Christian who wishes to see the true situation not only of Russian Orthodoxy, but also of world-wide Orthodoxy today — for the second text in particular contains drastic implications for any pan-Orthodox or "Ecumenical" council.*

Russian Orthodoxy today — betrayed by its hierarchs in the USSR, and represented only by the free bishops abroad and by a remnant of the faithful at home and abroad — lives in expectation of a restoration of true and canonical church order. This will doubtless come only at the longed-for Council of all Russian Orthodoxy after the fall of the Communist regime, when those who have kept the faith will be justified. For this restoration of true order the writings of Boris Talantov will be invaluable testimony. For they come from one who consciously experienced the Soviet Yoke from its begin-

ning, and they thus testify from within not only to the facts of Russian church life during those years, but more importantly, to the attitude toward them of the Orthodox faithful. Previously this had been known to some extent through those who had escaped from the USSR, but from within the country there was nothing to be heard but the repetitious propaganda of the Moscow Patriarchate, which attempted to drown out the truth and did indeed succeed in duping whole generations of gullible church figures in the West. But now, as the culmination of a decade of protests, the true attitudes of the faithful who remain in Russia have become known.

Boris Talantov, as these texts reveal, did not leave the communion of the Moscow Patriarchate; even though he was sympathetic to the members of the True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church whom he knew, he nonetheless repeats the standard Soviet terminology in calling this Church a "sect." Here, surely, one may be allowed to disagree. Without passing judgment on those who remain in the Patriarchate, we abroad can nonetheless not help but see that the solution of the present crisis of the Moscow Patriarchate — which is actually the culmination, as Talantov points out, of the betrayal of 1927 *— cannot come from within the Patriarchate alone, but must come from the whole confessing Orthodox Church of Russia: the believers in the Catacombs who remain faithful to the testament of Metropolitan Joseph and the many bishops in* 1927 *who declared the "Sergianist" Church schismatic; the true believers who remain in the Patriarchate; and the Church Outside of Russia. About the latter it is hardly likely that Talantov could have had any unbiased information. It must be remembered, then, that these documents offer, not a complete picture of the state of Russian Orthodoxy today, but rather an authentic voice of the Orthodox faithful within the USSR, and specifically of the Moscow Patriarchate's own flock. These texts, however, are doubtless some of the primary documents from which the "complete picture" of 20th-century Russian Orthodoxy will one day be known.*

The two texts are here presented in full, without omissions or additions of any kind, as translated from the Russian manuscripts obtained in 1968 *from an absolutely reliable source in Paris by the Rev. Michael Bordeaux of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism. The two titles and all parentheses and emphases (italics) in the text are those of the original; all notes and comments of the translators have been confined to the footnotes. Typescripts of the Russian manuscripts may be obtained for a nominal fee from: The Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism,* 13 *Red Hill, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7, 6DB, England. The texts are published here with the kind permission of Rev. Bordeaux.*

I. SERGIANISM, OR ADAPTATION TO ATHEISM (THE LEAVEN OF HEROD)

IN ENGLAND there has appeared a book by Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia,*† in which he, like others also in the West, in general approves the activity of Patriarch Sergius, even comparing him with Sergius of Radonezh and Patriarch Ermogen.*† In the West Patriarch Sergius is virtually considered to be the saviour of the Orthodox Church in Russia. Such an incorrect evaluation of the activity of Patriarch Sergius is based on the fact that Western researchers are not familiar with the underground facts and manifestations of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church. The roots of the profound ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were laid precisely by Patriarch Sergius.

In his Appeal to the faithful of August 19, 1927,** Metropolitan Sergius set forth new bases for the activity of the Church Administration, which at that very time were called by E. Yaroslavsky †† an "adaptation" to the atheistic reality of the USSR.

"Adaptation" consisted first and foremost of a false separation of all the spiritual needs of man into the purely religious and the socio-political. The Church was to satisfy the purely religious needs of citizens of the USSR without touching on the socio-political, which were to be resolved and satisfied by the official ideology of the CPSU.* The socio-political activity of every believer, according to this Appeal, should be directed to the building of a socialist society under the direction of the CPSU. In its further development this Adaptation resulted in the theory of Soviet theologians, according to which the Communistic organization of society is the only happy and just one, one supposedly indicated by the Gospel itself. At the same time no crit-

* Sergianism: *Sergievshchina.* This word is not precisely translatable into English, but is approximately "the Sergianist affair," with a pejorative connotation.

† London, 1967; original edition in French: *Les Chretiens en U.R.S.S.,* Paris, 1963. Nikita Struve is a Russian intellectual of the "Paris" school and present editor of the *Vestnik* of the Russian Student Christian Movement.

*† Outstanding Russian saints of the 14th and 16th centuries.

** The Appeal (Declaration) of Metropolitan Sergius was actually issued on July 16|29, 1927, but it was first published in the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* on August 19.

†† Head of the League of Militant Atheists, in charge of the anti-religious propaganda and activities conducted by the Soviet regime.

* Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

icism was allowed of the official ideology, laws, or actions of the authorities. Any accusation against the actions of the civil authorities or any doubt of the correctness of the official ideology was considered a deviation from purely religious activity and counter-revolution. The Church Administration headed by Metropolitan Sergius not only did not defend the believers and clergy who went to concentration camps for accusing the arbitrariness and violence of the civil authorities, but even spoke out itself, with slave-like servility, for the condemnation of such people as counter-revolutionaries. *In essence Adaptation to atheism represented a mechanical union of Christian dogmas and rites with the socio-political views of the official ideology of the CPSU.* In actual fact all religious activity was reduced to external rites. The church preaching of those clergymen who held strictly to Adaptation was totally remote from life and therefore had no influence whatever on the hearers. As a result of this the intellectual, social, and family life of believers, and the raising of the younger generation remained outside the Church's influence. This concealed great dangers for the Church and Christian faith. One cannot worship Christ and at the same time in social and family life tell lies, do what is unjust, use violence, and dream of an earthly paradise. Subsequently, Adaptation to atheism culminated in the heretical teaching of H. Johnson concerning a new religion, which in his opinion was to replace the Christian religion and be a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism-Leninism (see H. Johnson, *Christianity and Communism,* Moscow, 1957).† *Now the absurdity of H. Johnson's teaching is evident.*

The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius of August 19, 1927, made a painful impression on all believers, as a cringing before the atheist authorities. Some made peace with it as an unavoidable evil, while others came out decisively with a condemnation of it. A part of the bishops and faithful separated from Metropolitan Sergius. The bishops who had condemned the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius were soon arrested and banished to concentration camps, where they died. The ordinary believers who separated formed a special sect, called the True Orthodox Church, which from the very beginning of its formation right up to the present time has been proscribed.

Contemporary influential atheists regard Adaptation as a modernization of religion which is politically useful for the CPSU and harmless for the

† Hewlett Johnson, the notorious "Red Dean of Canterbury," a "Christian" apologist for Communism, wrote his book in English under the title *Christians and Communism* (London, 1956). That Soviet authorities should immediately have this book translated and printed in Moscow reveals that they are not entirely opposed to "religion"—not to a ***Communist*** form of religion!

materialistic ideology. "This (Adaptation — our addition. B.T.) *is one of the paths to the dying out of religion"* (Journal, *Science and Religion,** no. 12, 1966, p. 78).

Many both among us and in the West regarded and regard the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius as a statement made by the Church Administration under duress, with the aim of preserving church parishes and clergymen during the time of the despotism of J. Stalin. *But this is incorrect.* The Communist Party saw in this Appeal the Church's weakness, the readiness of the new Church Administration to fulfill unconditionally any instructions whatsoever of the civil authority, a readiness to give over to the arbitrariness of the authorities, under the guise of counter-revolutionaries, those clergymen who dared to accuse arbitrariness and violence. Here is how E. Yaroslavsky evaluated this in 1927: "With religion, even though Bishop Sergius may have adorned it in whatever worldly garb you may want, with the influence of religion on the masses of workers, we shall wage war, as we wage war with every religion, with every church" (E. Yaroslavsky, *On Religion,* Moscow, 1957, p. 155).

Objectively this Appeal and the subsequent activity of Metropolitan Sergius were a betrayal of the Church. From the end of 1929 until June, 1941, there occurred the mass closing and barbarous destruction of churches, arrests and sentencing by Troikas † and secret trials of virtually every single clergyman, most of whom were simply physically exterminated in concentration camps.

In 1930 Pope Pius XI came out before world public opinion with a protest against the persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union. How did Metropolitan Sergius react to all this? In the Theophany Cathedral in Moscow, with a cross in his hands, he came out with a declaration that there was no persecution at all against believers and their organizations in the Soviet Union, and there never had been any. Individual clergymen and believers, according to his assurance, were tried not for faith, but for counter-revolutionary manifestations against the Soviet regime. *Such a declaration was not only a monstrous lie, but also a base betrayal of the Church and believers. By this declaration Metropolitan Sergius covered up the monstrous crimes of J. Stalin and became an obedient tool in his hands.*

It should be noted that although the majority of bishops in 1927 acknowledged Metropolitan Sergius as their head, nonetheless in their activity

* A leading official Soviet anti-religious periodical.
† Troika: a committee of three secret police officials who sentenced their victims without hearing or appeal.

they did not hold to the "Appeal" and in their sermons they courageously accused the arbitrariness, lawlessness, and cruelty of the civil authorities, called on the people to stand firmly for the faith and help the persecuted. Therefore, for their sermons they were quickly placed in concentration camps and perished there. Of course, many clergymen and believers were placed in concentration camps for no reason at all, as potentially dangerous elements. In these circumstances a courageous statement by Metropolitan Sergius in defense of justice and faith could have had a great significance for the fate of the Russian Orthodox Church, just as the courageous battle for faith and justice of Cardinal Wyszynski had a great significance for the Polish Church at the end of the '40's.

And what did Metropolitan Sergius save by his Adaptation and monstrous lie? At the beginning of the Second World War in every region, out of many hundreds of churches there remained five or ten, the majority of priests and almost all the bishops (with the exception of a few who collaborated with the authorities like Metropolitan Sergius) had been martyred in concentration camps. *Thus Metropolitan Sergius by his Adaptation and lying saved no one and nothing, except his own person.* In the eyes of believers he lost all authority, but in exchange he acquired the good will of the 'father of the peoples," J. Stalin.

The majority of the churches that remained did not acknowledge Metropolitan Sergius.

The role of Metropolitan Sergius in the restoration of churches during the Second World War is greatly exaggerated in the West and, in particular, in the book of N. Struve. This evidently speaks of an ignorance of many underground manifestations and facts in the life of the Church in the USSR.

The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius to the believing citizens of the USSR on June 22, 1941, was received by true believers as a new cringing before the despotic regime and a new betrayal of the Church's interests. *All believers in Russia regarded and regard the Second World War as the wrath of God for the immense lawlessness, impiety, and persecution of Christians which occurred in Russia from the beginning of the October Revolution.* Therefore, not to remind the people and the government of this in an hour of dreadful trials, not to call the people to repentance, not to demand immediately the restoration of churches and the rehabilitation of all innocently condemned citizens of the USSR, *was a great sin, a great impiety.* Metropolitan Sergius again revealed himself to be an obedient tool of the atheist regime, which at that moment wished to use for its own ends the religious feelings of its citizens with the fewest possible concessions from atheism.

The restoration of churches within limited and narrow bounds was the State policy of J. Stalin, and not the result of the activity of Metropolitan Sergius. At that time among the people and in the army there was open talk of fundamental changes in domestic regulations in the land. The people hoped that immediately after the end of the war there would be declared freedom of occupation and in particular the liquidation of the collective farms, freedom of party, and freedom of conscience. The opening of churches was the bone which J. Stalin threw to a people worn out by war and hunger. The very opening of churches occurred under the control of State Security. And these organs sought out often priests from among those who remained at liberty or had sat out their term of imprisonment. In the Western Ukraine there were cases when priests refused to celebrate in churches under Metropolitan Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, and these same organs put these priests in concentration camps. In many regions the Patriarchate and the bishops took no part at all in the opening of churches. There were cases when new bishops under one pretext or another even resisted the opening of churches and the assignment to parishes of priests who had been in prison. The restoration of church life was incomplete, external, and temporary. From 1949 on the CPSU began imperceptibly to turn toward putting new pressure on the Church.

Thus, the opening of churches within narrow bounds was not the work of the hands of Metropolitan Sergius or Patriarch Alexis, but rather this opening was done by the atheist regime itself under pressure from the simple people in order to pacify them.

Patriarch Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, gathered and placed new bishops who, as distinct from the former bishops, who as a rule perished in the concentration camps (there were, of course, exceptions), were obedient to the Patriarchate and assimilated well the leaven of Herod, i.e., Adaptation to the mighty of this world. Here is how, for example, Bishop Vladimir of Kirov expressed Adaptation in his sermon of May 28, 1967. "We must adapt ourselves to new conditions and circumstances of life like a little stream which, on meeting a rock in its path, goes around it. We live together with atheists and must take them into consideration and not do anything that displeases them."

It is interesting that B. V. Talantov was told almost the very same thing at the KGB* on February 14, 1967: "You," — said the KGB agent, addressing Talantov — "demand that all closed churches be opened; but you

* State Security-Secret Police; known earlier under the initials NKVD, Cheka, and (originally) GPU.

live together with atheists and must take their wishes into consideration, and they do not wish that churches be opened."

In the St. Seraphim church in Kirov on January 20, 1966 — the day of commemoration of St. John the Baptist — one priest said in his sermon: "John the Baptist taught everyone very simply: obey the authorities in everything." From this it is evident that the new bishop, having assimilated Adaptation to atheism, has become an obedient tool in the hands of the atheist regime, and this is a most ruinous result for the Church of the long activity of Metropolitan, and then Patriarch, Sergius.

Adaptation to the atheist regime was clearly and precisely set forth in the book, *The Truth about Religion in Russia,* published under the editorship of Patriarch Sergius in the last years of his life, with the participation of Metropolitan (now Patriarch) Alexis and Metropolitan Nicholas.†

In this book Patriarch Sergius and Metropolitans Alexis and Nicholas categorically affirm that there has never been in the USSR any persecution of Christians, that information in the Western press about these persecutions are malicious inventions of the enemies of the Soviet regime, that bishops and priests during the years 1930-41 were sentenced by Soviet courts exclusively for their counter-revolutionary activity, and that the Church Administration itself at that time was in agreement with their being sentenced. The monstrous lie of this affirmation is apparent from the fact that very many priests who were executed or perished in concentration camps under J. Stalin were rehabilitated under N. S. Krushchev. The most courageous fighters for truth and Christian faith are declared in this book to be schismatics, "politicians," and practically heretics. This book should be anathematized; it will be an eternal shameful memorial of Patriarch Sergius. *And now with full justification we can call Adaptation to the atheistic regime by the name of Patriarch Sergius — Sergianism.*

Did Adaptation (Sergianism) save the Russsian Orthodox Church?

From what has been set forth it is clear that not only did it not save the Russian Orthodox Church during the despotism of J. Stalin, but on the contrary it furthered the loss of genuine freedom of conscience and the conversion of the Church Administration into an obedient tool of the atheistic regime.

† Of Krutitsk, notorious apologist of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Soviet regime abroad after the Second World War. He later fell from favor and died under mysterious circumstances in 1961.

Cardinal Wyszynski's categorical rejection of Adaptation to the atheistic regime and his subsequent and firm battle for Evangelical truth and genuine freedom of conscience has resulted in the fact that today in Poland the Church* in actuality is independent from the State and enjoys considerable freedom.

Thus, one cannot defend the Church by a lie.

Adaptation is little faith, lack of faith in the power and Providence of God.

Adaptation is incompatible with true Christianity, because at its foundation there is a lie, servility before the mighty of this world, and a false separation of spiritual needs into the purely religious and the socio-political. According to the teaching of Christ, faith must direct the intellectual, family, and social life of every Christian. *Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world* (Matt. 5:13, 14), said Christ, addressing His followers. In accordance with this Cardinal Wyszynski says: "In Poland the Church must penetrate everything: books, schools, upbringing, the people's culture... painting, sculpture and architecture, theater, radio and television... social and economic life" (quoted from the journal *Science and Religion,* no. 1, 1967, p. 63).

II. THE SECRET PARTICIPATION OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN THE BATTLE OF THE CPSU AGAINST THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH (THE CRISIS OF THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATION)

THE "ADAPTATION" which was planted by Metropolitan Sergius has resulted in the fact that, beginning in 1960, the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops objectively have secretly participated in all actions of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, a participation directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of the faith, and the undermining of the latter among the people.

The majority of bishops in the period 1960-64 withdrew from the battle against the illegal closure of churches and the illegal removal of priests from registration. The numerous complaints of believers to the Moscow Patriarchate against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration remained without any answer. *More than this, the Moscow*

* I.e., the Roman Catholic Church, which is dominant in Poland.

Patriarchate itself issued a circular concerning the fusion of parishes which did not have sufficient income. As a result of abuse, many churches which did have sufficient income were closed by this circular. Now the atheists who hold power, together with Metropolitan Nikodim, affirm, relying on this circular, that supposedly all the churches closed in the years 1960-64 lacked sufficient income. This lie is repeated in an article in the *Kirov Pravda* of May 31, 1967: "With an Open Visor."

Certain bishops, for example Bishop John,† have closed churches themselves and removed worthy priests. All this has become known now from the letters of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin, the "Open Letter of Kirov believers," and many other materials. *An irrefutable proof that the Moscow Patriarchate has secretly participated in the closing of churches is the fact that neither the bishops (with some exceptions, for example Archbishop Ermogen, who, however, was removed from his See by the Patriarchate), nor the Moscow Patriarchate has ever come out anywhere with a protest against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration, and what is more they have even come out with declarations that there was no mass illegal closure of churches in the USSR in the years* 1960-64. *Churches, according to their assertion, were closed because they did not have sufficient income.*

With the aim of limiting the propagation of faith and undermining it among the people, the bishops have unconditionally submitted to all the oral directives of the authorities, which have been directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith, and they have demanded the same thing of priests. Thus, for example, Bishop John of Kirov firmly declared to his priests that any one of them who will not unconditionally fulfill the directives of the authorities will be forbidden to serve as a priest. *At the same time, the priests and bishops, in fulfilling the oral directives of the authorities, presented these directives to the people as if they came from the Church Administration and not from the civil regime, and they even uncanonically demonstrated their lawfulness and necessity.* The Patriarchate itself issued a number of circulars directed to the limitation and undermining of faith; such was, for example, Circular no. 1917, which demanded of priests as an official obligation to cooperate in the registration of passports while celebrating private services on request.* All this is discussed in detail in the letters of the Mos-

† Of Kirov; see below.

* *Treby*: baptisms, funerals, etc.

cow priests, in the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers," and other letters and complaints of believers.

Here are the chief measures directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith which are being carried out by the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, with the participation of the clergy:

1. Obligatory registration of passports before the celebration of certain services by request.† 2. Not allowing children of school age to receive confession, communion, or baptism. 3. Chasing beggars out of churches and church yards. 4. Forbidding believers to spend the night on church porches. 5. Institution of the time for celebrating services by request in village churches of the Kirov region, during the summertime, at from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. 6. Forbidding the administering of communion and unction to the sick at home without special permission.*

Certain bishops, for example Bishop John of Kirov, by their amoral conduct, outrageous acts, and despotic willfulness have striven to undermine faith among the people; and the Moscow Patriarchate, knowing of the intolerable conduct of such bishops from the numerous complaints of believers, not only has not brought such bishops to ecclesiastical trial, but has even promoted them. Such bishops have removed worthy priests from parishes and placed unworthy persons in their place. All this has led to the moral corruption of the clergy and a total undermining of faith in the Church.

In conformity with Adaptation to atheism, sermons in church as a

† This important rule is a part of the general system of terror that still prevails in the USSR for believers. These records are transmitted by local authorities to places of employment, etc., and the believer who dares ask for a baptism, funeral, or some other open service finds himself soon out of a job and in general ostracized from society.

* A few months after this was written, this very rule was applied against Talantov's dying wife, as Talantov himself describes in his "Complaint to the Attorney General of the Soviet Union" of April 26, 1968 (English text in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, Aug. 15|31, 1968): "On the day of her death, I wished to have the rite of unction performed for her, as she desired. But the Dean of the sole remaining open Orthodox church in the city of Kirov, that of St. Seraphim, told me that the local authorities forbade the rite of unction to be performed in homes. This deplorable case demonstrates that believing Christians in the city of Kirov are deprived nowadays even of those rights that they were given by J. V. Stalin."

rule have become scholastic discourses, remote from life, on religious themes. Because of their remoteness from time and space, they cannot act in any way on the hearers. In such sermons there is lacking even any mention of such basic vices, errors, and faults in contemporary life as lying, flattery, the breaking up of families, moral corruption, the atheistic upbringing of children, servile fear before the mighty of this world, and injustice.

The Moscow Patriarchate has made the rejection of Christian apologetics, of the ideological battle with atheism, the chief principle of its activity, both within the country and outside.

Such religious-moral instruction on the part of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church cannot interest the younger generation or act positively upon it. *Thus, the religious-moral instruction of the Russian Orthodox Church is such that it cannot lead to the propagation of faith among the younger generation. By this alone the continued existence of the Church is undermined.*

In every diocese there is felt an acute insufficiency of priests even for the small number of churches that are open. For the propagation of faith and its strengthening it is essential to strive to increase in each diocese the number of worthy priests who are devoted to the Church and qualified to spread the faith. *But the bishops have absolutely withdrawn from the selection, instruction, and training of the clergy ranks, by which they definitively undermine faith and the Church.*

The number of theological schools and the number of those studying in them is so small that it cannot even make up the natural decrease of clergymen. Education and instruction in the theological schools are set up in such a way that out of them there come *bureaucrats in cassocks* who are ready to adapt themselves to external circumstances by any means whatever for the sake of acquiring a secure, easy, and undisturbed life in an atheistic State. In them the chief thing is killed: idealism, courage, and aspiration for justice. The spirit of the Seminaries (and Academies) is Adaptation. In the theological schools there is being conducted an intensified recruitment of students as secret agents of the KGB, especially in the foreign divisions of the Academies.

Thus at the present time the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops are secretly participating in the organized actions of the atheist regime (CPSU) which are directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of faith and its undermining in our country.

The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is directed, in the first place, to covering up, by means of shameless lying and slander, the mass illegal closure of churches, the oppressions of believers and their organizations, and the secret administrative measures directed toward the undermining of faith within the USSR.

In the second place, the activity of the Patriarchate is directed to deflecting as much as possible, by means of deceit and lying, the development of the Christian movement in the whole world on to a false path and thereby undermining it.

Such, for example, was the proposal of the Moscow Patriarchate at the Rhodes Conference of Orthodox Churches to renounce Christian apologetics and the ideological battle against contemporary atheism.* *The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. She steps forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti-Christianity.*

Metropolitan Nikodim is betraying the Church and Christians not out of fear but for conscience's sake; thus a complete unmasking of his and the Moscow Patriarchate's traitorous activity will mean the end of his shady career.

But the time has come for the unmasking of the traitorous activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad, the hour of judgment upon Metropolitan Nikodim.†

An irrefutable proof of the undermining, traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate is an event which arose in connection with the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis."

In August, 1966, this letter was sent by believers to Patriarch Alexis. In it the believers expressed their support for the letter of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin and described the misfortunes which the parishes of the Kirov region had suffered as a result of the lawless deeds of the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and Bishop John of Kirov. This letter, which accuses the arbitrariness and

* This occurred in 1961. The question of atheism and the means of battling against it were on the agenda of this Conference, but at the objection of Metropolitan (then Archbishop) Nikodim the question was dropped.

† Here Talantov seems to be expressing the fervent hope of many in the ideological "underground" in the USSR, rather than any immediately impending event. This is corroborated by the report of a Russian Orthodox student from America concerning a meeting of members of the widespread "Democratic Movement" which he had the rare privilege of attending in Leningrad early in 1970. Some of those present expressed their opinion on the subject of the "autocephaly" which was just then being granted the American Metropolia by the Moscow Patriarchate. Their attitude was summed up by one member who, mentioning that outspoken protest against the Patriarchate was finally becoming evident in the USSR, castigated the "naive Americans" thus: "What are you Americans doing?! Here for 50-odd years we've been trying to minimize the popular authority of any and all such governmental agencies as the Moscow Patriarchate, and you, in conditions of freedom, undo all our work by accepting their authority!"

lawlessness of the local civil authorities and the Church Administration, does not touch at all upon the Soviet social and governmental order and has no relation whatever to the organs of State Security. The letter was signed by 12 believers of the Kirov region with exact addresses given. Eight of those who signed the letter were from the city of Kirov (formerly Vyatka). Among their number was the author of the letter B. V. Talantov, whose signature and address stood first. He is well known to the Patriarchate and to Metropolitan Nikodim. Three of those who signed were from the city of Nolinsk, and one of these was the student of the Odessa Seminary Nikodim Nikolaevich Kamenskikh. The twelfth believer who signed the letter was Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, an elderly woman from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa. She had been constantly working for the opening of the All Saints church in the city of Belaya Kholunitsa, which had been illegally closed in 1962.

This letter became known abroad, and on December 8, 1966, BBC Radio revealed in brief its content. Although in essence the letter was not a complete unmasking of the unworthy activity of the Moscow Patriarchate, nonetheless it threw a shadow abroad on all the assurances of Metropolitan Nikodim and others concerning the well-being of the Russian Orthodox Church. Evidently this very much disturbed the Patriarchate and the KGB. They began to act simultaneously and according to an agreed-upon plan.

On February 14, 1967, B. V. Talantov was summoned to the Kirov Administration of the KGB. Here, after he had been threatened at first with prison, it was proposed that he renounce the "Open Letter" in the form of a written declaration that could be published in one of the newspapers. Evidently he was to have declared in writing that he had never composed or signed the "Open Letter" that had become known abroad. He categorically refused to do this and confirmed in written form that he was the author precisely of the letter that had become known abroad, and likewise of the letter to the newspaper *Izvestia* (received by the newspaper on July 19, 1966), and that he was ready to bear responsibility for the content of these letters. At that time he did not understand at all why there was demanded of him the renunciation of his own signature in a written declaration which, what is more, was to be published in one of the central newspapers. Later events solved this enigma.

On February 25, 1967, Radio BBC revealed the replies to questions put to Metropolitan Nikodim in connection with the "Open Letter from Ki-

rov." He declared this letter anonymous and therefore not deserving of trust. To confirm the sincerity of his words he expressed his readiness to make an oath on the Cross and the Gospel. The name and address of B. V. Talantov without any doubt were well known to him from the previous letters of B. V. Talantov. Then why did he make such a risky declaration? One would think that he was trusting in the impossibility for the Kirov believers to refute abroad the deceit of his declaration. But subsequent events compel one to think that he was trusting that the KGB by threats would force the believers who had signed the "Open Letter" to renounce their signatures.

At the very time when, in London, in the pompous grandeur of his social position Metropolitan Nikodim was striving by a false oath to prove the anonymity and dubiousness of the "Letter from Kirov," in Kirov itself at the KGB Administration it was proposed to B. V. Talantov, with threats of prison, that he renounce his signature under this letter. Evidently the coincidence of these events was not accidental.

B. V. Talantov, indignant at the shameless lie of Metropolitan Nikodim, on March 19, 1967, sent to Patriarch Alexis a new letter, in which he confirmed the authenticity of the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers" and sternly accused the impious action of Metropolitan Nikodim. At the same time he sent a copy of his letter to the Patriarch to Odessa to his young friend N. N. Kamenskikh, who at this time was a student in the second class of the Odessa Theological Seminary. Through N. N. Kamenskikh this letter, and likewise the impious statement of Metropolitan Nikodim in London, became known to almost all the students at the Odessa Theological Seminary and to many residents of the city of Odessa. From this moment on new events began to occur.

The letter of B. V. Talantov to Patriarch Alexis of March 19, 1967, became known to the Kirov administration of the KGB at the end of March or in the first days of April, apparently through Bishop Vladimir of Kirov. Immediately after this the seven Kirov believers who had signed the letter were called to the Kirov city council one at a time for interrogation. Here the secretary of the city council, A. Y. Ostanina, together with a KGB agent (the latter was not present in all cases), threatened each one with prison if he would sign any other document composed by "the dangerous political criminal" Talantov. Notwithstanding all the intimidations, none of those interrogated renounced his signature under the "Open Letter."

Bishop Vladimir of Kirov travelled to Odessa and on April 12 he visited for some reason Archbishop Sergius. On April 15 B. V. Talantov in-

formed his friend N. N. Kamenskikh, by a letter sent to the Seminary, of the interrogations in Kirov of the believers who had signed the "Open Letter." But this letter N. N. Kamenskikh did not receive.

On April 26 the Inspector of the Seminary Alexander Nikolaevich Kravchenko summoned N. N. Kamenskikh, read him B. V. Talantov's letter of April 15, and demanded of him that he renounce in written form his support of the "Open Letter" of B. V. Talantov. N. N. Kamenskikh had either to renounce the genuineness of his own signature (meaning that his name and address had been put without his knowledge), or declare that B. V. Talantov had somehow deceived him. A. N. Kravchenko warned N. N. Kamenskikh that if he did not make such a declaration he would be excluded from the Seminary. In order to win N. N. Kamenskikh to his side, A. N. Kravchenko made use of the following sly tactic. He said: "Write this declaration, and I won't show it to anyone. When you finish the Seminary I will give it back to you." But N. N. Kamenskikh saw through the Inspector's trick and categorically refused to sign the declaration that was demanded of him. At the same time he asked the Inspector to give him the letter of B. V. Talantov, inasmuch as it was addressed to him. The Inspector refused to give him the letter and ordered him to think about his fate. From this moment there began a battle between N. N. Kamenskikh and the leadership of the Seminary, which was fulfilling the will of Metropolitan Nikodim and the KGB. For a whole month the entire Seminary followed this battle with intense interest. *One might call it the war of Nikodim the small with Nikodim the great.* The first is small both in age (he is 24 years old) and in his position in society. The second is of mature years and high position in the Church and in Soviet society.

Nikodim Kamenskikh is the son of a believing Christian who was banished to the Kirov region. Want and hunger in childhood and adolescence, constant endurance from the age of 17 of threats, insults, and oppressions for his open confession of Christian faith — have left their imprint on N. N. Kamenskikh. He suffers from a stomach ulcer. From the age of 17 he served as an altar-boy in the church in the village of Bais in the Urzhumsk district of the Kirov region. At this young age he courageously defended the church in the village of Bais against illegal closure. Twice on this account he travelled to Moscow to the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (see the letter of B. V. Talantov to the newspaper *Izvestia* of July 19,

1966) and by this drew on himself the anger of the local authorities. When he was summoned for military service to the Urzhumsk district military committee, at his medical examination he categorically refused to take off his neck cross, and for this he was sent for medical examination to the psychiatric hospital in the city of Kotelnich. After many trials and abuses he was excused from military service on account of illness (stomach ulcer), but he was not left in peace. At the beginning of 1963 the local authorities sent the "fanatic" Nikodim out of the city of Bais and he became a homeless laborer-stovemaker, earning his living by sporadic jobs. By performing work too difficult for the state of his health he earned 30 to 40 rubles a month. The militia of Urzhumsk district fined him at this time, as a "parasite," 30 rubles, thus depriving him of his living for a whole month. Finally with great difficulty he found work and registered* in the city of Nolinsk. But want, a wandering life, and overwork put him in a hospital cot for a long time. After all these adventures he succeeded in 1965 in entering the Odessa Theological Seminary. For the whole course of his conscious life he has seen around him and has himself personally endured insults and oppressions for his open confession of the Christian faith. In his own life's experience he became convinced that true believing Christians are the pariahs of Soviet society. He signed the "Open Letter of Kirov believers" not with ink but with his own blood. Therefore it is understandable that he could not renounce his support of this letter, and he began courageously to battle for justice with Nikodim the great, who, having by cunning Adaptation attained high rank, human glory and wealth, entered on the path of injustice. In this battle Nikodim the small placed all his hope in the invisible God, while Nikodim the great placed his hope in visibly-mighty human power and strength.

On May 7 B. V. Talantov, surmising by the silence of N. N. Kamenskikh that his letter of April 15 had not arrived, sent him at the Seminary a new letter in which he repeated the content of the letter of April 15. At the same time he sent a letter to the Seminary to the seminarian of the third class, Ivan Ilyich Naumov, a friend of N. N. Kamenskikh, in which he asked I. I. Naumov to communicate to N. N. Kamenskikh the content of his letters of April 15 and May 7, if he had not received them, and likewise to give his greetings to seminarian Leonid Michaelovich Beresnev.

* There is no freedom of movement in the USSR. Each citizen must have a passport in order to live anywhere, and he must register with local authorities on entering or leaving any town — and this registration may be refused at the whim of the local authorities.

These letters were received by the Seminary not later than May 12 or 13 and were intercepted by Inspector A. N. Kravchenko, who did not even tell the addressees about them. From these letters he learned that I. I. Naumov and L. M. Beresnev were sympathetic to Nikodim Kamenskikh. Evidently the Inspector A. N. Kravchenko checked all letters coming to the seminarians, at the assignment of the KGB. In order to clarify the "freedom and secrecy of correspondence," one must point out that N. N. Kamenskikh, thinking that his letters sent to Talantov were not reaching the latter, sent him during May two letters addressed to D. I. Okulov, janitor of the St. Seraphim church in Kirov, who was well acquainted with B. V. Talantov. D. I. Okulov did not receive either letter. This means that someone working at the St. Seraphim church, at the assignment of the KGB, was checking all letters that came to this church and holding them back at his discretion. Thus, secret agents of the KGB control all correspondence coming from the Seminary, the churches, and "suspicious" believers.

On May 17 the Inspector, A. N. Kravchenko, summoned I. I. Naumov and L. M. Beresnev and demanded of them that they persuade Nikodim Kamenskikh to write a declaration renouncing his support of the "Open Letter." He told them that if they did not act on Nikodim in the direction he wished, they would be excluded from the Seminary as his accomplices.

On May 19, Nikodim Kamenskikh gave to the Inspector of the Seminary A. N. Kravchenko an official declaration, wherein he once again confirmed the authenticity of his signature and his agreement with the content of the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers."

On May 21 the Inspector told Nikodim that he must appear the next morning, May 22, at the KGB at the address 43 Babel, Bureau of Passports, Garbus 3. Nikodim Kamenskikh, after writing down this address, calmly said that he would not go to the KGB Administration until he received an official notification. This caused the Inspector to lose his self-control, and he began to reproach Nikodim for going against the Patriarch, because he supported the Moscow priests. He concluded his discourse with the angry words: "If you do not leave the Seminary voluntarily, you will be turned out, and you will be sorry when you go home."

On May 22 Nikodim was summoned to the diocesan administration and here by telephone an official of the Council for Religious Affairs asked him why he had not appeared at the KGB Administration. He replied that he would not go there until he received an official notification.

On May 24 the Rector of the Seminary took from N. N. Kamenskikh his military card and passport and told him that he was to be expelled from Odessa. He replied that all blame for this rested on the Rector and the Inspector.

On May 29 the Rector and the Inspector of the Seminary proposed to Nikodim Kamenskikh that he leave the Seminary "at his own wish." He refused to do this. *In the evening the Faculty Council excluded him from the student-body of the Seminary for failing to conform to the spirit of the Seminary.* He was given a roll in which it was stated that he is transferred in the first category to the third class, and a certificate of exclusion. On June 19 he sent a declaration from the city of Kirov to the Patriarch in which he again confirmed his agreement with the "Open Letter" and asked that he be allowed to undertake studies in the third class.

On June 20 the militia of the city of Nolinsk refused to register him at the place of his former residence, and he again became a homeless pauper. But the battle was not yet finished. On May 20 four of the persons who had signed the "Open Letter" sent a declaration to the Patriarch, in which they protested against the deceitful declaration abroad of Metropolitan Nikodim.

In April A. D. Zyryanova from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa (the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter") was put in an insane asylum, from which her sister took her out.

On May 31 in *Kirov Pravda* there was printed the article of S. Lyubovikov, "With an Open Visor," filled with slander and threats against the author of the "Open Letter," B. V. Talantov.

All persons who signed the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers" were subjected to threats and repressive measures, but they did not renounce their signatures or their agreement with the Letter.

Now the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis," broadcast on the BBC on December 8, 1966; the declaration of Metropolitan Nikodim abroad concerning the anonymity and unauthenticity of this Letter, broadcast on the BBC on February 25, 1967; the pressure subsequently brought to bear by the organs of State Security (KGB) and the leadership of the Odessa Theological Seminary on the persons who signed this letter, with the aim of compelling them to renounce their signatures; finally, their firm support of this Letter, notwithstanding threats and repressive measures — all this constitutes irrefutable proof of the traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate and her secret cooperation with the atheists who hold power.

The documents confirming this are:

1. Tape recording of the BBC Radio broadcast of February 25, 1967. 2. The letter of B. V. Talantov to the Patriarch of March 19, 1967. 3. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary of May 19, 1967. 4. The letter of a group of Kirov believers to Patriarch Alexis of May 20, 1967. 5. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to Patriarch Alexis on June 19, 1967. 6. A copy of the certificate excluding N. N. Kamenskikh from the student-body of the Odessa Theological Seminary, of May 29, 1967, notarized. 7. The article of O. Lyubovikov, "With an Open Visor," in *Kirov Pravda* for May 31, 1967.

The Adaptation to atheism implanted by Metropolitan Sergius has concluded with the betrayal of the Orthodox Russian Church on the part of Metropolitan Nikodim and other official representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad. This betrayal, irrefutably proved by the documents cited, must be made known to all believers in Russia and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate, relying on cooperation with the KGB, represents a great danger for all believers. In truth the atheistic leaders of the Russian people and the princes of the Church have gathered together against the Lord and His Christ.

The accusation by the whole people of the betrayal of the princes of the Church will inevitably lead to a crisis of the Church administration, but not to any kind of church schism, as certain ill-wishers of the Church affirm, as well as people who unconsciously follow them.

Believers must cleanse the Church of false brethren and false pastors (the betrayer-bishops and priests) in accordance with the commandment of the holy Apostle Paul: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." Only after such a cleansing is a true regeneration of the Church possible.*

Many true believers of Russia have fervently prayed to God that He would show believers facts that would indisputably prove the secret betrayal by the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, if it exists. Now these facts, by God's mercy, are revealed to all who can really hear and see.

About a hundred years ago the Optina Elders predicted that a time would come when in Russia there would be impious bishops. Now this time has arrived. But because of the corruption and betrayal of the bishops the believers should not disperse to their homes and organize separate sects, but rather preserving unity, they should begin the accusation by the whole people of the corrupt false pastors and cleanse the Church of them.

August, 1967 (*Signature*) *B. V. Talantov*

* I Corinthians 5:13.

Slanders and threats had a painful effect on the wife of B. V. Talantov, Nina Agafangelovna Talantova. As a result of her painful sufferings, and having suffered already for a long time from a hypertonic condition, on September 7 she had a stroke, and she died on December 16, 1967.

Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter," died in a hospital on December 27, 1967. The threats hastened the approach of death. All those who signed the "Open Letter" suffered in one degree or another, but they did not renounce their signatures.

By the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of June 6, 1967, the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, A. N. Kravchenko, was awarded the Order of Prince Vladimir, second degree (see the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate,* no. 8, 1967).

By decree of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of April 4, 1967, the Rector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, Archimandrite Theodosius, was raised to the rank of bishop. By decree of the Holy Synod of October 7, 1967 (see *JMP,* no. 8, 1967), Bishop Vladimir of Kirov was assigned as Bishop of Berlin and Exarch in Central Europe, and by the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of October 20, 1967, he was raised to the rank of Archbishop (see *JMP,* no. 11, 1967).

March 30, 1968 (*Signature*) *B. V. Talantov*

EDITORS' CONCLUSION: On June 12, 1969, *Boris Talantov was arrested, and on September* 3 *he was sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet activities." He died in prison on January* 4, 1971.

And thus it would seem, as the world judges, that evil triumphs. Boris Talantov and his courageous fellow-confessors are persecuted, suffer, and die; while for Metropolitan Nikodim not only has the "hour of judgment" not come, but his star seems still to rise. The Moscow Patriarchate gains new prestige and a new ally by its sponsorship of the "autocephaly" of the American Metropolia. And Orthodox Christians in America do not even suspect that they have become passive accomplices of a diabolic program of betrayal and anti-Christianity in the name of Orthodoxy.

But evil triumphs only in the eyes of men of little faith. "One cannot defend the Church by a lie." *The True Orthodox Christians of these last days are defeated on every hand: mocked by the world and by the betrayers of Orthodoxy, despised, persecuted. And yet for one thing they are unconquerable: they stand in the truth. And thus, as our God is Truth, their ultimate victory is certain. Only, may the "hour of judgment" come soon for the betrayers of Orthodoxy!*

Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World

IMPORTANT DECREES OF THE SOBOR OF BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

THE TRIENNIAL SOBOR (Council) of the entire Russian Church Outside of Russia, which met in Montreal in September, 1971, with fourteen bishops in attendance, issued a number of important decrees of general interest. Some of the decrees, concerning relations with the other Russian "jurisdictions," serve to make the position of the Russian Church Abroad quite clear and distinct in a time of much ecclesiastical confusion: the final breaking of all communion with the American Metropolia over its "autocephaly"; the declaration of the invalidity of the election of "Patriarch" Pimen as well as of all his decrees; and the condemnation of Constantinople's new infringement of the rightful jurisdiction of the Russian Church by once more taking under her wing (with obviously political motives born of the "autocephaly" scandal, since just six years ago she had compelled this group to leave her jurisdiction under pressure from Moscow) the remnant of the "Eulogian" schism in Western Europe.

Other decrees of the Sobor are of great importance for all of contemporary Orthodoxy. It can be said with no exaggeration that no other body of Orthodox bishops in the world today — with the sole exception of the bishops of the persecuted True Orthodox Christians of Greece — would dare to issue such decrees that fly in the face of contemporary intellectual fashion and ecclesiastical politics: the acknowledgement of ecumenism as "a heresy against the dogma of the Church"; the re-establishment of the strict practice of baptizing all Catholics and Protestants who come to Orthodoxy; the censuring of the establishment of actual communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Latin church as "an act not only anticanonical but heretical"; and the declaration of spiritual unity with the proscribed True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church of Russia (see page 267). Beyond this the bishops gave a spiritual consolation to their flocks by authorizing the beginning of preparations for the canonization of Blessed Xenia and the New Martyrs of Russia.

The texts of these decrees are presented below, with some omissions which are indicated by dots in the text; the headings have been added by the translators.

ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

1. *Concerning the Election of a Patriarch in Moscow (Sept. 1|14)*

...In 1917 the All-Russian Sobor adopted a decree concerning the restoration of the Patriarchate in Russia and elected to the Patriarchal Throne His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.... The system of elections [at this Sobor], assuring complete freedom and having been confirmed by the All-Russian Sobor, was never abolished by a free Sobor of equal authority. Therefore, elections of Patriarchs performed in another manner which is not free, do not express the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church and are not lawful. Not only the election of the present Pimen, calling himself Patriarch, but as well the elections of his two predecessors, must be considered unlawful... At all three elections of Patriarchs no one attempted or had the opportunity to nominate any candidate besides the one indicated beforehand by representatives of the civil authority.

The violation of the lawful succession of higher Church Authority in the Russian Church began in 1927, when the Substitute of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhegorod, violated the instructions of the Metropolitan of Krutitsk [Peter], whom he was replacing, and signed an agreement with the atheistic civil regime, to which neither Metropolitan Peter nor other elder hierarchs had agreed. The Soviet regime began to imprison all the hierarchs who did not agree with Metropolitan Sergius, thus clearing the way for him to become head of the Russian Church. He, on his part, without taking account of the elder hierarchs, formed a Synod at his own personal designation and, while Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, to whom by his position the governance of the Moscow diocese belonged, was still alive, he unlawfully adopted the title of Metropolitan of Moscow with the right to wear two Panagias....

All the elections of Patriarchs in Moscow, beginning in 1943, are invalid on the basis of the 30th Canon of the Holy Apostles and the 3rd Canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, according to which "if any bishop, having made use of secular rulers, should receive through them episcopal authority in the Church, let him be deposed and excommunicated together with all those in communion with him"....

Taking into consideration all the above-mentioned reasons, the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, as representing the free part of the Russian Church, *decrees*: The election of Pimen (Izvekov) as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia at the gathering of June 2 of this year in Moscow, calling itself an All-Russian Church Sobor, by authority of the 30th Canon of the Holy Apostles, the 3rd Canon of the Seventh Ecu-

menical Council, and the other reasons cited in the present decree, is acknowledged as unlawful and invalid, and all his acts and decrees as having no authority whatever.

2. *Concerning the Possible Sanctions of the Moscow Patriarchate*

The Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia became acquainted on September 1|14, 1971, with the decree of the so-called All-Russian Church Sobor, according to which the Moscow Patriarchate intends to "make effective in the near future the necessary canonical sanctions" with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

This decree, as likewise a series of other decrees of the same Sobor, was clearly made to please the atheistic Soviet regime. Not for nothing does it stand in line with a decree approving the political statements of the late Patriarch Alexis and a testimony approving the politics of the USSR.

Having considered this decree, the Sobor of Bishops *decrees*: In order for any decree to have force and significance, it is required that the person concerning whom it is brought be in the canonical jurisdiction of the person or institution that is bringing judgment against him. The decree of the persons assembled in the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, calling themselves an All-Russian Sobor, was brought against a hierarchy which has no relation at all to them. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, founded fifty years ago and having its canonical foundation in the Decree No. 362 of November 7|20, 1920, of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod meeting jointly with the Higher Church Council, has never been in the jurisdiction of the present Moscow Patriarchate. The enslaved state of the latter under the atheistic regime and the unlawful elections of the last three Patriarchs indicate that the conditions indicated in the above-mentioned Decree for the autonomous existence of the Russian Church Outside of Russia continue to exist even now.

The very attacks against the Western world which are contained in the "Appeal of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Whole World" testify to the fact that the Russian Church Outside of Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate find themselves in parts of the world which are deeply divided politically, and sometimes no less so than in countries between which there is a military front. Therefore, even in case the elections of the Patriarchs did not evoke doubts as to their lawfulness, it would be necessary to preserve abroad the present status of the free part of the Russian Church, on the basis of the Decree of November 7|20, 1920.

During the past fifty years the entire composition of the hierarchy of the Church Outside of Russia has changed, and the present ruling bishops

never had any obligations whatever with regard to the present Moscow Patriarchate and they could not have any, inasmuch as they acknowledge her as canonically unlawful and as having broken faith with the truth of Christ from the time that Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 put as her foundation the simultaneous serving of Christ and Belial.

Therefore, if the Moscow Patriarchate shall attempt to apply any kind of canonical sanctions to the hierarchy of the free part of the Russian Church, this will be an act unlawful and invalid.

3. *On the Heresy of Ecumenism (Sept.* 3|16)

At the report of Protopresbyter George Grabbe, the Sobor adopted the following resolution: Having heard the detailed report of Protopresbyter George Grabbe concerning ecumenism and acknowledging ecumenism to be a heresy against the dogma of the Church, the Sobor of Bishops requests the Chairman of the Sobor [Metropolitan Philaret] to come out with a new Sorrowful Epistle, warning the Orthodox world against this heresy.

4. *On Relations with the American Metropolia (Sept.* 3|16)

...The American Metropolia has received its autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate, which has lacked authentic canonical succession from His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon from the time when Metropolitan Sergius, who subsequently called himself Patriarch, violated his obligation with respect to the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne Metropolitan Peter and entered a path which was even then condemned by the elder hierarchs of the Russian Church. Ever more submitting to the commands of the atheistic, anti-Christian regime, the Moscow Patriarchate has ceased to express the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church. Therefore, as the Synod of Bishops has correctly declared, no act of hers, including also the giving of autocephaly to the North American Metropolia, has lawful authority. Incidentally, apart from this, this act, touching on the rights of many Churches, has already evoked the decisive protests of a number of Orthodox Churches, which have even broken off communion with the American Metropolia.*

* Decisive protests have been officially made by the four Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch (the last-named being the least sharp in tone), and by the Churches of Greece and Serbia. In the spring of 1971 the Greek Archdiocese in New York broke off communion with the Metropolia, and relations between these two bodies remain indeterminate up to now. Texts of the chief protests are printed in *The Orthodox Observer Quarterly,* Oct.-Dec., 1971, where the arguments, however, do not even touch on the main issue at stake: the canonical invalidity of the decrees of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Viewing this unlawful act with sorrow and acknowledging it to be invalid, the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which up to now had not completely given up hope for the restoration of ecclesiastical unity in America, sees in the declaration of American autocephaly a step that leads the American Metropolia even farther away from the ecclesiastical unity of the Russian Church. Seeing in this a great sin against the enslaved and suffering Russian Church, the Sobor of Bishops *resolves*: In future, both for clergy and laymen, to have no communion in prayer or Divine services with the hierarchy and clergy of the American Metropolia.

5. *On the Constantinopolitan Jurisdiction of Russian Parishes in Western Europe* (*Sept.* 7|20)

In connection with the inclusion of Russian parishes in Western Europe into the Exarchate of the Patriarch of Constantinople, *we have resolved*: The Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, having been informed of the new decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in which the Russian parishes in Western Europe headed by Archbishop George are received into the Greek Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in France, protests against this act as violating the rights of the Russian Church and as being an uncanonical interference in her affairs.

Already in 1930 the head of the free part of the Russian Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony, and the Sobor of Bishops of this Church declared a protest against a similar act. Therefore, the Sobor of Bishops affirms that the inclusion of a part of the Russian parishes in Western Europe into the Exarchate of the Patriarch of Constantinople is an act violating the rights of the Russian Church, as tearing away from her a significant part of her flock and her property.

6. *On the Canonization of the New-Martyrs of Russia* (*Sept.* 10|23)

At the request of 256 people, including two bishops, concerning the canonization of the New-Martyrs of Russia, headed by the Royal Family.... the Sobor of Bishops, after a detailed consideration of this question, *decrees*: The Sobor of Bishops bows with reverence before the sacred exploit of the Russian New-Martyrs and sympathizes with their glorification. On the occasion of the just-completed 50th year of the Russian Church Outside of Russia and the more than 53 years of persecution against the Russian Orthodox Church, the Synod of Bishops is entrusted with undertaking the collection of material in regard to the question of glorifying the assembly of New-Martyrs who suffered from the fighters against God.

7. *Concerning the Canonization of Blessed Xenia* (Sept. 11|24)

...*We have resolved*: to entrust to the Synod of Bishops the collection of material on the question of the canonization of Blessed Xenia.

8. *Concerning the Baptism of Heretics* (Sept. 15|28)

On the question of the baptism of heretics who accept Orthodoxy, the following *decree* was adopted: The Holy Church has believed from of old that there can be only one true baptism, namely that which is performed in her bosom: *One, Lord, one faith, one baptism* (Eph. 4:5). In the Symbol of Faith there is also confessed "one baptism," and the 46th Canon of the Holy Apostles directs: "A bishop or a presbyter who has accepted (i.e., acknowledges) the baptism or the sacrifice of heretics, we command to be deposed."

However, when the zeal of any heretics in their battle against the Church has weakened and when there was a question of a mass conversion of them to Orthodoxy, the Church, to facilitate their union, has received them into her bosom in a different way....

St. Basil the Great, and through his words an Ecumenical Council [the Sixth], while establishing the principle that outside the Holy Orthodox Church there is no true baptism, allows, out of pastoral condescension, which is called "economy," the reception of certain heretics and schismatics without a new baptism. And in accordance with such a principle, the Ecumenical Councils permitted the reception of heretics in various ways, in accordance with the degree of the weakening of the heretics' enmity against the Orthodox Church.

In the *Rudder* [Book of Canons] the following explanation of Timothy of Alexandria is given. To the question: "Why do we not baptize heretics who convert to the Catholic Church?" he replies: "If we did this, a man would not soon convert from heresy, being ashamed of a second baptism; thus by the laying on of the priests' hands and prayer, the Holy Spirit descends, as the Acts of the Holy Apostles testifies."

With regard to Roman Catholics and those Protestants who claim to preserve baptism as a sacrament (for example, the Lutherans), in Russia since the time of Peter I the practice was introduced of receiving them without baptism, through a renunciation of heresy and the chrismation of Protestants and unconfirmed Catholics. Before Peter, Catholics were baptized in Russia. In Greece, the practice has also varied, but almost 300 years ago, after a certain interruption, the practice of baptizing converts from Catholicism and Protestantism was reintroduced. Those received in any other way have (sometimes)

not been recognized in Greece as Orthodox. In many cases such children of our Russian Church were not even admitted to Holy Communion.

Having in view this circumstance and also the current growth of the ecumenist heresy, which attempts completely to erase the difference between Orthodoxy and any heresy — so that the Moscow Patriarchate, notwithstanding the holy canons, has even issued a decree permitting Roman Catholics to receive communion (in certain cases) — the Sobor of Bishops acknowledges the necessity of introducing a stricter practice, i.e., to baptize all heretics who come to the Church, only in case of necessity and with the permission of the bishop allowing, for reasons of economy or pastoral condescension, any other practice with regard to certain persons — i.e., the reception into the Church of Roman Catholics and those Protestants baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, through a repudiation of heresy and chrismation.

9. On the Giving of Communion to Roman Catholics and Old Believers by the Moscow Patriarchate (Sept. 15|28)

In regard to the decision of the Moscow Synod to permit Roman Catholics and Old Believers to receive communion without the renunciation of their errors, a decision that was confirmed by the decree of the gathering which called itself an All-Russian Sobor, *we have decreed:*

The lack of accord of the decree of the Moscow Patriarchate, concerning the granting of communion to Roman Catholics, with Orthodox dogmatic teaching and the Church canons is completely clear to any person even slightly informed in theology. It was justly condemned by a decree of the Synod of the Church of Greece. The holy canons do permit the communication of a great sinner who is under penance (*epitimia*) when he is about to die (I Ecumenical 13, Carthage 6, Gregory of Nyssa 2 and 5), but there is not a single canon which would extend this to include persons foreign to the Orthodox Church, as long as they have not renounced their false doctrines.

No matter what explanation Metropolitan Nikodim and the other Moscow hierarchs might try to give this act, it is completely clear that by this decision, even though with certain limitations, communion has been established between the Moscow Patriarchate and Roman Catholics. Furthermore, the latter have already made the decision to permit members of the Orthodox Church to receive communion from them. All this was particularly clearly demonstrated in the service held on December 14, 1970, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, when Metropolitan Nikodim gave communion to Catholic clerics. It is perfectly clear that this act could not be justified by any need. By this act the Moscow Patriarchate has betrayed Orthodoxy.

If the 45th Canon of the Holy Apostles excommunicates from the Church an Orthodox bishop or cleric who has "only prayed together with heretics," and the 10th Apostolic Canon forbids even prayer together with those who are excommunicated, what can we say about a bishop who dares to offer the Holy Mysteries to them?

If catechumens must leave the church before the sanctification of the Gifts and are not permitted even at the point of death to receive communion until they are united to the Church, how can one justify the communicating of persons who, being members of heretical communities, are much farther away from the Church than a catechumen, who is preparing to unite with her?

The act of the Moscow Synod, which was confirmed by the recent Sobor of the Moscow Patriarchate in Moscow, extends the responsibility for this un-Orthodox decision to all participants of the Moscow Sobor and to their entire Church organization. The decision to admit Catholics to communion is an act which is not only anticanonical, but heretical as well, as inflicting harm on the Orthodox doctrine of the Church, whereas only true members of the Church are called to communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The Moscow decree, logically considered, recognizes as her members those who, through their doctrinal errors, in both heart and mind are far from her.

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1971 INDEX

Pagination: Issue no. 1, pp. 1-48; no. 2, pp. 49-96; no. 3, pp. 97-144; no. 4, pp. 145-192; no. 5, pp. 193-264; no. 6, pp. 265-304.

Agathangel, Metropolitan 15, 27, 67
Alexander, St., of Lyons 58
Alexis, Starets of Goloseyevsky Hermitage 189-190
Anastassy, Metropolitan 70
Anastasios, St., Life of 148-153 *ill.*
Anatole the Younger, Starets of Optina
  Life, *ill.* 180-188
Andreev, Prof. I. M.
  "An Interview with Metropolitan Sergius" 84-89
Anschar, St., of Hamburg 57
Anthony Khrapovitsky, Metropolitan 63-65, 70, 83, 298
Atheists' Dictionary 20-21

Barsanuphius, Starets of Optina 182*ill.*
Basil the Great, St. 299
Blandina, St., of Lyons 58

Calendar, Orthodox (St. Herman) 193-264
Campbell, Robert, Dominican theologian 160, 174-175
Catacomb Church in Russia
  New Age of Catacombs 1, 3, 39
  Metr. Joseph of Petrograd 8-22 *ill.*
  Epistles of Metr. Joseph 26-30
  Interview with Metr. Sergius 84-89
  Epistles of Bishop Dimitry 89-90
  Epistles of Bishop Victor 112-118, 123-125
  See also True Orthodox Church
Clotilde, St., Queen of France 58
Cloud (Clodoald), St. 58
Columban, St. 58
Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan 67, 70

Daniel, Yuly 22, 30, 31
Derugin, Vladimir 126-129
Dimitry, Bishop of Gdov 15, 27, 84-88 passim
  Life 91-93 *ill.*
  Separation of (Document) 89
  Letter to Priests 90

Ecumenical Movement 137-144, 297, 300
Efstathios (Eustathius), Great Martyr
  Life 4-7, 40-48 *ill.*
Epipodius, St., of Lyons 58
Eugene, Bishop of Rostov 27

Felician, St., of Foligno 58
Fridolin, St. 58

Gall, St., Hermit in Switzerland 58
Genevieve, St., of Paris 58
Germanus, St., of Auxerre 58
Germanus, St., of Paris 58

Herman, St., of Alaska 195-196
  St. Herman Calendar 193-264
Hilary, St., of Poitiers 58
Hinduism 154-166, 174-179
Honoratus, St., of Lerins 58

Ignaty, Elder of Harbin 22

John (Maximovitch), Archbishop
  Blessed John Maximovitch 49 *ill.*, 51
  Archbp. John, Man of God 52-5 *ill.*
  Archbp. John, Apostle to the West 56-59 *ill.*
  Archbp. John, Fearless Champion of True Orthodoxy 60-61 *ill.*
  "New Age of Martyrs and Catacombs" 3
  "The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia" 62-70, 76-83
  "Holy Water" 99
  "Life after Death" 147, 189-191
  And the Orthodox Calendar 196
Joseph, Starets of Optina 182 *ill.*
Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd 91-2
  Biography 8-22 *ill.*
  Epistles of 26-30

Kontzevitch, Prof. I. M.
  "Starets Anatole the Younger and the Destruction of Optina Monastery" 180-188 *ill.*
Kuznetsov, Anatoly 31

"Living Church" 13-14, 114
Lupus, St., of Troyes 58

Macarius, Starets of Optina 182 *ill.*
Mamas, St., Great Martyr
  Life 100-111 *ill.*
Martyrology of the Communist Yoke
  Metr. Joseph of Petrograd 8-30 *ill.*
  Archbp. Dimitry of Gdov and his Priest Nicholas Prozorov 91-6 *ill.*
  Bp. Victor of Glazov 112-118, 123-5
  Starets Anatole the Younger of Optina 180-188 *ill.*
Maximovitch; *See* John, Archbishop
Metropolia, American 135, 285, 297-8
Monophysites 137-138
Moscow Patriarchate 31-39, 62-83 *passim*, 274, 281-293, 295-297, 300-301
Moses, Abbot of Optina 182 *ill.*

Nazarius, Abbot of Valaam Monastery
  Counsels of 23-25, 71-75, 119-122, 167-173
Netherlands Orthodox Church 56
New-Martyrs of Russia 3, 298
  See Martyrology of Communist Yoke
Nicholas, Archbishop of Japan 78
Nikodim, Metropolitan of Leningrad 33-34, 282-293 *passim*, 300
Nikon, Archbishop of Washington and Florida 133-135
Non-Christian Religions
  "Dialogue" with? 137-144, 154-166, 174-179

Optina Monastery 180-188 *ill.*

Paisius Velichkovsky, Starets 180
Patrick, St., of Ireland 58
Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk 13, 17-18, 26, 67-70
Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow 133-136, 295
Pothinus, St. 57
Prelest 156-157, 163
Prozorov, Priest Nicholas 91-96

Rhodes Conference (1961) 285
Rostov, Alexei 92-96
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia 56-59, 60-70, 76-83, 133-136, 294-301

Sakkas, Fr. Basile
  "Do We Have the Same God That Non-Christians Have?" 140-144